



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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New digs for recovering guard dogs

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Scott Huddleston
Express-News Staff Writer

Tails will be wagging when a new facility opens next year at Lackland AFB.

The Defense Department last week announced the awarding of a \$9.27 million contract with McGoldrick Construction Services Corp. of San Antonio to build a 30,950-square-foot hospital, set to open in September 2007. The facility will be providing medical help to canines guarding against terrorism.

The Military Working Dogs Veterinary Service at Lackland now is in a 15,000-square-foot site built in 1968 that has a sagging foundation, poor heating and air conditioning, and worn-out electrical and plumbing systems.

Worst of all, in an age when security needs have raised demand for dogs to sniff out explosives and guard buildings, it doesn't have room for dogs to recover.

Renovations to the site in the mid-1980s and early '90s didn't add space.

"It never was built to accommodate what we're trying to stuff into it right now," said Army Lt. Col. Michael Lagutchik, director of the veterinary service.

The new building has been badly needed for years and will be the largest, most comprehensive facility of its kind, he said.

"It's the only one of its kind in the DOD," Lagutchik said.

Its size will let the service keep its functions — such as radiology, surgery, internal medicine and critical care — efficiently compartmentalized. They're now mixed, scattered in a cramped site that houses 34 doctors, technicians and other staff: civilians, contractors and Army personnel, he said.

Also, the hospital will have its own \$1 million CT scan machine and other imaging equipment and no longer will have to do imaging at nearby Wilford Hall Medical Center.

It will have designated suites for dental work and, perhaps most important, space for dogs recovering from surgery or suffering from hip dysplasia, back problems and orthopedic injuries.

The dogs — typically large breeds such as Belgian malinois, Labrador retrievers and German or Dutch shepherds — routinely jump, climb, burrow and wiggle in their line of work, which can result in injury.

The service has had to delay procedures on some dogs because it lacks rehabilitation space, Lagutchik said.

The new hospital will have a 40-kennel recovery wing with dry treadmills and underwater treadmills: low-impact exercise machines that are the state of the art in canine physical therapy.

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Along with the more than 700 dogs at Lackland being trained by the Air Force's 341st Training Squadron for military duty or airport security worldwide, the veterinary service also takes referrals worldwide.

The Defense Department and Transportation Security Administration both started their own breeding programs at Lackland in recent years to meet the increased demand for the trained dogs.

Work on the new hospital is set to begin next month.

"This building will bring us to where we should've been years ago," Lagutchik said.



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Lackland AFB, Texas



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Beamer in Iraq: Steep Descent, No Lights

By [Randy Beamer](#), News 4 WOAI

BALAD AIR BASE, IRAQ - Flying into a combat zone, as they call it, is surreal. It's more like a rollercoaster ride at times than any airline flight you can imagine. We flew into this old Iraqi Air Force Academy north of Baghdad on a C-17 at night because it's safer under the cover of darkness. Just to make sure they evade any hostile fire, the lights on the plane are off and the landing is much steeper than anything coming into San Antonio.

The flight from Ramstein, Germany carried a full load of supplies and an aero-medical evacuation team of seven. The most impressive sight was the speed of the medevac team. They turned what was a cargo plane into a flying hospital that will turn around and fly about two dozen patients back to more peaceful care at the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center near Ramstein.

We're here to focus on the San Antonio people from the Wilford Hall Medical Center running the Air Force Theater Hospital. But already in Ramstein we ran into over a dozen San Antonians. The two C-CAT teams (Critical Air Transport Teams) boarding the plane with the patients were both from Wilford Hall.

Beamer in Iraq: Incoming Mortar Fire

By [Randy Beamer](#), News 4 WOAI

BALAD AIR BASE, IRAQ - After an overnight flight from Germany and shooting an incredible, very quick transformation of a cargo plane into a flying hospital, we got a good solid three hours of sleep. But don't feel sorry for any pampered TV-types. Everyone here is on 12-hour shifts with many workdays lasting much longer.

Many of those doing the heavy-lifting here in Iraq are your friends and neighbors from San Antonio. As we were getting briefed by San Antonio's own man in charge of the hospital here, we heard a muffled page warning of "indirect fire." That's their phrase for incoming mortar fire. They assure you that by the time you hear that announcement, if you haven't been hit yet, you should be fine.

Reassuring.

I'm also told the incoming mortar fire onto the base seems to have dropped. I get different figures, but some say it's down to about one a day. The last major injury was in January when a soldier lost his eyes as a mortar exploded nearby. That's the reason everyone here has body armor and a helmet. Many even have ballistic goggles. But many don't wear them all the time, as they used to.

Col. Don Taylor is the commander here and he clearly has a passion for it. He's in charge of the 377 people staffing the hospital, the biggest chunk of them from Wilford Hall. He gave me a great tour of the hospital, which is really an incredible complex of tents connected by hallways that can stretch the length of a football field.

Already, we've seen what high-tech equipment and such a highly-trained staff can do to save lives. A foreign contractor was part of a convoy hit by one of those infamous IED's (Improvised Explosive Device). This guy didn't realize anything major was wrong with him. He was walking and talking, but after IED blasts they like to CATSCAN people to make sure. Good thing they did. He had a half-inch metal fragment that had pierced his skull and lodged on the other side of his brain. If they hadn't caught it, doctors tell me he could have suddenly suffered severe seizures or worse.

These same doctors also save the lives of Iraqi insurgents. As the contractor was having the skin on his skull peeled away in one operating room, a guard with an M-16 was sitting outside another,

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awaiting word about the insurgent inside. Doctors were reconstructing the face of an Iraqi insurgent who had been firing mortar rounds at U.S. troops when he got hit with a bullet to the face.

Iraqi or American, insurgent or contractor, the doctors don't discriminate. One described it to me as a pure mission: Saving lives in the middle of a war zone.



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Air Force Times



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Trainer slides off runway; no injuries

Associated Press

STILLWATER, Okla. — A training jet from Vance Air Force Base, Okla., slid off the runway at Stillwater Regional Airport during a routine training mission and started a small grass fire, fire officials said.

No injuries were reported after the T-1A Jayhawk and its three-man crew overshot the end of the runway while landing about 11:29 a.m. Friday, said Stillwater Battalion Chief Gary Stanton.

The accident is under investigation by Air Force officials.

Stillwater is one of the outlying airports regularly used by Vance aircraft for routine training missions.

The Jayhawk is a twin-engine jet used to train students selected to fly cargo or tanker aircraft. Each jet costs approximately \$4.1 million.

Information from the Enid (Okla.) News & Eagle



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Air Force Times



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Lieutenants to learn soon who stays, goes

By [Rod Hafemeister](#)

Times staff writer

SAN ANTONIO — As the force shaping board convenes, it seems the wait won't be as long as expected for the Air Force lieutenants eager to learn who stays and who is separated.

Air Force leaders want to separate 708 lieutenants in the 2002 year group — or 46 percent of the 1,536 still eligible for the force shaping board — and 187 of the 549 eligible in the 2003 year group. That's about 34 percent.

Originally, the board's decisions were expected to be announced by June 1, but the Air Force Personnel Center's Web site now lists a tentative release date of May 10.

A major general will preside over the board, and five panels will consider related career fields. Each panel will consist of a brigadier general and four colonels, with the colonels coming from the career fields that panel will consider.

Selected lieutenants must separate by Sept. 30. They will be allowed to apply for transfer to the Army under the Blue-to-Green program, officials have said, but the Army will decide ultimately who joins its ranks.

Air Force leaders announced the separation plans last fall, saying it was necessary to separate more than 1,700 lieutenants to deal with serious imbalances in certain career fields in the 2002 and 2003 year groups.

About half opted to leave active duty under various voluntary programs before the March 15 deadline. Enough volunteered in 12 career fields to allow officials to remove those fields from consideration by the force shaping board.

In the future, officials plan to hold an annual board to consider lieutenants for separation during their fourth year of commissioned service.

Detailed information on the force shaping is available on the personnel center's [Web site](#).

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AETC News Clips

Laughlin AFB, Texas



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Command changes coming to Laughlin

By Bill Sontag, Del Rio News-Herald, Published Page 1, April 7, 2006

In what promises to be a string of new command assignments at Laughlin Air Force Base this spring and summer, one of the most recent is the arrival of Col. Dan Laro Clark, vice wing commander of the 47th Flying Training Wing.

Col. Tod D. Wolters is leaving his post as commander of the wing, and his change of command date and replacement are to be announced soon. In addition, Col. Laura Torres-Reyes will depart from the directorship of Laughlin Clinic this summer, and several of the 15 squadron commanders are leaving, too.

Clark and other members of the wing command are gradually getting settled into larger, more functional accommodations in the new Wing Headquarters building, immediately adjacent to the former installation. The new building is a consolidation of many functions not previously co-located with the wing command.

Clark arrived at Laughlin March 3, filling the chair of former Vice Wing Commander Col. Thomas Arko. Arko was a B-1 bomber pilot, and Clark's preference is for the smaller, but faster F-15E "Strike Eagle" fighter. In fact, Clark was an F-15 aerial demonstration pilot for the Air Combat Command on the East Coast.

Now, of course, Clark flies Laughlin's T-38C "Talon," the fighter trainer used by students in Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training. He is well familiar with the aircraft, having served at Columbus Air Force Base, Miss., as the conversion to the "C" model, with a more efficient engine and dramatically different avionics, was being produced and flown for the first time.

Clark is a 1981 aerospace engineering graduate of Texas A&M University, holding a Master of Science degree there in the same major. He's a native of Brownwood, Texas, and his wife, Susan hails from Abilene. The couple are parents of a four-and-one-half-year-old daughter, Alexandra, and the family is already well settled into base housing.

Between AggieLand and Laughlin, Clark has touched down at a fine diversity of career-developing bases and office assignments.

He came to Laughlin from a Pentagon tour of duty in the Air Force Division of Regional Plans and Issues in which he coordinated talks with air forces in France, Italy, Japan, England, Canada, India and Korea. Clark helped coordinate discussions as wide-ranging as international communications, rescue operations, and increased coalition capabilities and capacities.

But Clark earned his wings at the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training school, Sheppard Air Force Base, near Wichita Falls, in 1986.

He's received numerous awards, including the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, the Air Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Aerial Achievement Medal with two oak leaf clusters. Clark also earned the Southwest Asia Service Medal.

Clark expects to spend most of his efforts at Laughlin working on improving the expeditionary capabilities of military members at the base. Laughlin has made significant contributions to overseas deployments to the Middle East, and Clark wants to better prepare airmen for such assignments.

He is also keen to preserve and improve the "quality of life" for Air Force personnel, maintaining what he sees as an excellent relationship with the Del Rio community.

Clark said colleagues wondered why he wanted to come to Laughlin and Del Rio, in such a remote location. "But then, when I talked to people who had already been here, every one – to a person – said it was one of the best assignments they'd ever had," Clark said.

Clark said he sees no dramatic changes in the mission of the base as reflected in numbers of trainees and graduates.

Despite the thrust of a recent article in the San Antonio Express-News (March 27) describing an Air Force move to reduce personnel strength by 23,000 people and to "thin a flock of planes that in some cases are a half-century old," Clark sees a steady stream of pilot candidates and graduates coming to and graduating from Laughlin.

The base currently graduates and pins silver wings on about 400 pilots each year.

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Luke AFB, Ariz.



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Launch and recovery, here they come

Andrea Hoehne
staff writer

Last week, the first article in this series introduced five men training to be F-16 crew chiefs. Now it's time to meet their three 25-year-old instructors.

Sgt. Matt Knoche, from Billings Mont., has been at Luke Air Force Base for six and a half years, and an instructor for one year. Knoche also mixes it up as a disc jockey by night, and has been for 10 years, operating through the Web site www.toonzdj.com.

Sgt. Nick Essex, an instructor for three years, also has a side job: He's a real-estate agent. Essex was born in Detroit, but raised in Tempe. After graduating from Luke's Mission Ready Airman program, he traveled to Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska before coming back to Luke.

Next is Sgt. Shane Hutchins from Fayetteville, Ark. Though he doesn't have a professional side job, he plays flag football on a team at Luke, and is still completing his instructing internship.

Throughout the 20-day program, the three men take turns teaching different lessons. And though they may instruct on different areas of the jet, they have one thing in common — safety is No. 1 on their teaching agendas.

"One last thing," Essex said as he taught the students how to inspect a section of the jet. "Is that safe?"

"No sir," they responded in unison.

A part of safety management at Luke is the FOD bag that airmen wear to collect foreign object debris in order to prevent foreign-object damage. The crew chiefs in training wear these bags on fluorescent yellow belts; the color signifies to others on the flightline that these young men are part of the Mission Ready Airman program. Therefore, any questions regarding the students should be directed to their instructors.

What they're learning

As the young crew chief hopefuls completed their second week of hands-on training, they learned how to inspect the cockpit, which is now referred to as the "crew station," and how to check the entire exterior of the jet as part of pre-flight instruction. But they were more eager to actually launch their first jet.

"The stuff we're doing now isn't bad, but I'm looking at launching," Airman Theodor Johnston said. "It's a lot to remember, and you just have to remember."

"I'm just excited and ready to get this stuff under way," Airman 1st Class Aaron Barrett said.

And the airmen will get under way with launching and recovering jets as soon as they complete the certification process. The Air Force employs a special teaching method to ensure the maximum amount of knowledge is retained: First instructors teach students a task, then students complete task, next students teach instructors the task they just completed. That's the certification process.

"It's a lot easier to learn hands on, rather than reading in a book," Airman 1st Class Andrew Bell said. "You can retain it a lot more."

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Luke AFB, Ariz.



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Beyond learning about jets, though, these men also must continue learning about the Air Force during this primary phase of military life. To keep them from entering a state of being overwhelmed, a resident adviser, or military training leader, lives with them for support.

He assists the students as they learn the Air Force's core values, as well as supports them with their health and morale. With his help, learning such a large quantity of information doesn't seem to be quite the daunting task that it could.

"When we first started learning about the military at basic training, they piled it on," Barrett said. "Now it's more like a refresher."

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AETC News Clips

Tyndall AFB, Fla.



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NEWS ANALYSIS

Analysts call Raptor a failure

Shortfalls of F-22 far outweigh celebrated aircraft's advantages, report details

By Ed Offley
News Herald Writer 747-5079 / eoffley@pcnh.com

It was the most impressive fighter aircraft seen to date.

Designed around a breakthrough technology, it was heavily armed with the latest air-to-air weapons and was capable of flying faster than its enemies and destroying previously invulnerable enemy aircraft.

One British pilot called it "the most formidable fighter" that the world had seen to date. Its pilots said it was a delight to fly.

Yet military historians today say the German Messerschmidt 262 fighter had little effect on the air war over Europe during World War II, and two military aviation experts last week warned that the U.S. Air Force likely has set itself up to repeat the harsh lesson of the Me-262 "Stormbird" in a future conflict against an adversary with a modern air force.

Simply put, said Pierre Sprey and James P. Stevenson, the F-22 Raptor is shaping up to be the Sturmvogel of the 21st century: a dazzling piece of technology that fatally ignores some of the unbending realities of aerial combat.

On surface, the Raptor debate ended six months ago. After years of controversy, the Air Force and Defense Department reached a final agreement on the Raptor program, with DoD and Congress approving full production of the stealth fighter while capping the program at 183 aircraft, a 50-percent reduction of the 381 planes that the service had long said it needed at a minimum.

For Tyndall Air Force Base, where the Raptor pilot training program is located, this has meant a reduction in training squadrons from two to one, with 29 of the sleek fighters to be used in preparing pilots for combat units.

But to Sprey, a founding member of the so-called "fighter mafia" group that during the 1960s and 1970s ramrodded the F-15, F-16 and A-10 programs into being despite fierce internal opposition, and military author Stevenson, who has written extensively on the Navy's F/A-18 and A-12 fighters, the Air Force has created a major crisis in its future combat capability by sticking to the Raptor program.

The two analysts presented their stark findings to a symposium at the nonprofit Center for Defense Information on Friday in Washington, D.C. The two analysts provided their findings to The News Herald, and Sprey elaborated on the issues in a telephone interview.

Sprey said his briefing focused on the time-tested factors that define an effective fighter plane: (1) See the enemy first; (2) outnumber the enemy; (3) outmaneuver the enemy to fire, and (4) kill the enemy quickly.

"The Raptor is a horrible failure on almost every one of those criteria," Sprey said.

The stellar attribute of the F-22 — its invisibility on enemy radar due to a computer-aided stealth design — is a "myth," Sprey said. That is because in order to locate the enemy

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beyond visual range, the Raptor (like every other fighter) must turn on its own radar, immediately betraying its location.

Nor is the aircraft design effective simply because its advocates insist so, Sprey said. The 1980s-era F-117 stealth fighter was supposed to be invisible too, but post-Gulf War studies showed that the aircraft had been spotted by Iraq's ground-based radars, he said.

And in the 77-day aerial campaign against Serbia in 1999, the adversary's "s-era radar" managed to locate and shoot down two F-117s, Stevenson pointed out in his presentation. The situation is actually worse today, he said, because many nations have acquired advanced missiles that can home in on radar emissions.

"Who do you want in a dark alley?" Stevenson asked. "The cop with the flashlight, or the crook with a gun that fires light-homing bullets?"

Because the Raptor ultimately ballooned into a weapon that costs \$361 million per copy, even Congress could not stomach the total program cost exceeding \$65 billion, Sprey said. As a result, the Air Force is now committed to fielding a fighter program that lacks sufficient numbers to prevail in a major conflict, however effective the individual aircraft may be.

"Hitler had 70 Me-262s in combat," Sprey said. "They were crushed by the force of 2,000 inferior P-51s that the United States had in the air."

Early reports from mock deployments of the Raptor also show a major shortfall in the fighter's sustainability in combat, Sprey said.

"The F-16 costs one-tenth of the F-22 and flies three times as often due to the issues of stealth, complexity and maintenance affecting the Raptor," Sprey said. Sustainability and the number of aircraft available to fight on any given day, he added, are "vastly more important" than the quality of the F-22. "You have to have numerical superiority to win."

On the last two points, maneuverability and capability for a "quick kill," the two analysts assert that the Raptor is inferior to the F-16 and several allied fighter designs in the crucible of "energymaneuverability."

"Some (experts) assert that in the next air war," all of the radars will be off and the air war will merge to air combat maneuvering," Stevenson observed.

The Raptor's performance in that mode will be "disastrous," Sprey added.

"The only thing that will bail the U.S. Air Force out of this mess is the fact that they still have a lot of F-16s in service," Sprey said, "The day they send the F-16s to the 'boneyard' is the day the service becomes a non-Air Force."



U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Jim Hecker, commander of the 27th Fighter Squadron at Langley Air Force Base descends from an F-22A Raptor on Feb. 14 at Tyndall Air Force Base after firing a missile during evaluations of the Raptor over the Gulf of Mexico. Terry Barner / The News Herald

The News Herald

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